



The Urban Planning and Land Access to Social Housing: Lesson Learnt from Brazilian Experience

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The objective of this paper is to analyze the tools, used by the Director Plans of some municipalities located in the São Paulo State, to promote the access to urban land addressed to the social housing production. This is an important issue to analysis because the Brazilian federal government is addressing a huge amount of money to produce social housing as a measure to fight the consequences of global crisis like unemployment and recession. In this paper, the purpose is to investigate how some of those municipalities with Director Plan are using, or are not, the innovative tools to link urban planning and social housing production in the cities.

In this decade, the urban planning and social housing policy have experienced some very innovations verified in the largest Brazilian cities, especially after the approval of the Statute of the Cities in 2001. The Statute of the Cities is a federal law which regulates the chapter about the urban policy included in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. It brings a very important group of directives and urban policy instruments that can be used by the municipal governments and their professional teams to elaborate the Director Plan proposed as the basic instrument to define the cities' and urban land's social functions in the municipal level. Those definitions have to be expressed in the Director Plan's principles, directives, objectives, norms, land use parameters and public investments in the local territories, among others elements.

The Director Plan must be made by the professional in a social participative process. Its contents have to take the characteristics of the local territories in a account in order to: (a) organize the use and occupation of the urban and rural areas; (b) to induce the utilization of urban land which are unoccupied for speculative purposes; (c) to create conditions to improve the living conditions and to regularize the land of low income informal settlements; (d) to define the adequate urban land which must be used by new social housing produced by the public authorities or private companies; (e) to define priorities to the public actions and investments in the urban and rural spaces which are necessary to improve the living conditions of the people; (f) to indicate the urban areas that needs the implementation of projects addressed to the renovation of urban spaces; (g) to capture part of the urban land revenue in order to invest in the precarious areas; (h) to democratize the urban planning and management processes. The municipalities with more than 20.000 inhabitants and which are located in metropolitan regions were obliged to have their Director Plan approved in the municipal council until October 2006. More than 90% of those municipalities approved their Director Plan, but most of them have serious problems in definitions and contents. The Director Plans approved in the municipalities of the São Paulo State and its relation to social housing investments are our analysis object.

KEY WORDS: Urban planning, social housing policy, urban land access, direct plan.